

Kentucky Literacy Link

A Publication of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

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Be Sure to Secure Your Own Oxygen Mask First

The other day – with the *Literacy Link* past deadline, my inbox full of e-mails and another semester of full time Ph.D. work starting – I had a thought. As per usual, I was on the verge of hyperventilating or vomiting (as I always am whenever I'm experiencing extreme anxiety, sadness, excitement or joy) and I thought back to my days in the classroom.

I remember staying at school until after 6 at night or arriving around 6 in the morning. I remember carrying things home and dragging that same unfinished stuff back the next day. And I remember that I wasn't the only one with those habits.

Most importantly, I remember having a conversation with the plant operator on one such occasion. She poked her head into what should've been my empty classroom and shook it in dismay.

"You're going to burn yourself out," she warned. She was right, of course. We teachers are the worst at setting boundaries. We go and we go, we give and we give, until we are utterly spent. We love our jobs, we love our stu-

dents, and we want them to be successful.

Our society idolizes teachers who sacrifice their own well-being. Think of *Freedom Writers*, where Hillary Swank plays real teacher Erin Gruwell, who has to get a second job to buy books and supplies for her classroom – destroying her marriage in the process.



The flip side of that is Cameron Diaz's *Bad Teacher* image. Mass firings are championed as a tool to get rid of those who are in it for short days and long summers, who are babysitters and ne'er-do-wells. They come late and leave early and don't care about or even like kids at all.

I say pooh-pooh to all of that.

Resist the tyranny of *or*. You're not Hilary Swank or Cameron

Diaz. You don't have to give everything or nothing. You don't have to choose what's best for kids or best for you.

The truth is, you're a person. A real person who deserves a life of your own and needs to take care of yourself. And when you do that, you'll be better-equipped to take care of our students.

Have a hobby. Exercise. Visit friends. Take naps. Read for pleasure. Dance. Sing. Shop. Talk to your spouses and children. Watch TV. Go outside. Laugh. Be human.

Set a reasonable time to leave work each day, or choose one day a week to stay late and go home on time all the others. Be creative with resources (share and collaborate!) and spend less of your own money. Leave your work at work.

Secure your own oxygen mask before assisting others. You're no good to anyone if you aren't good to yourself.

Mikkaka "MK" Overstreet is a KDE literacy consultant and the editor of this publication. Contact her at mik-kaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov.

Kentucky Department of Education Updates

My CIITS Homepage for Students

The CIITS "Student Portal" now is called the "My CIITS Homepage for Students." This change is effective immediately to eliminate any confusion with the Infinite Campus student portal.

The My CIITS Homepage for Students became available in June with release of Version 15.0. This allows teachers to search content

intended for students, assign the content to students, set assignment parameters such as visible start/end/due dates, and provide instructions and comments for the assignment. More information on assigning resources to students is available [here](#).

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) Update
PGES Timeline:

- 2013-14 – Statewide pilot using the system with a specific number of staff in each district
- 2014-15 – Statewide implementation without consequences (no use of the system for personnel decisions)
- 2015-16 – Statewide implementation with consequences (use the system to make personnel decisions)



Spotlight: Bullitt County's Reading Fair

[Mikkaka Overstreet](#) is a KDE literacy consultant and the editor of this publication.

This spring I received the rare treat of visiting a real live school (something I rarely get to do in my position) to attend something called a reading fair. Similar to a science fair, students create descriptive and creative display boards, showcasing a novel of their choice. Storyboards represent a fictional book at an appropriate reading level. Students are cautioned not to simply focus on the artistic/creative aspects of this task but to remember that this is a reading assignment.

There is certainly an element of fun to the reading fair. For example, models, shadow boxes and props can be displayed with storyboards, and students advancing to the district level can wear costumes affiliated with the storyline of the book. The storyboards go beyond the parameters of a traditional book report, requiring students to consider more complex story elements such as the author's purpose and the tone of the text. Projects are judged (typically by unbiased "outsiders" such as community members and administrators rather than teachers or parents) using a predetermined [rubric](#).

The reading fair started as a small event in Bobbi Caranna's 8th-grade classroom but soon grew to include the entire school. This

year, several other middle schools in Bullitt County joined in – first judging reading fair projects at their own schools and then sending their top scoring selections on to Bullitt Lick Middle School for district-level judging. Next year the project is expected to expand to include all middle schools in Bullitt County.

During my visit to Bullitt Lick Middle School, I observed quite the buzz surrounding the reading fair. Students frequenting the school's media center (where the projects were displayed) were eagerly studying the storyboards during any spare moment they could find.



When teachers weren't looking, I entertained several whispers from students asking what I thought of particular projects as I walked around with my judge's clipboard.

In Toni Weddle's language arts class, students wanted to tell

me about the projects they'd submitted that hadn't made it to the final round and to inform me of what they planned to do better for next year's fair. The authentic enthusiasm for literacy exhibited by the students definitely made my nerdy little heart happy.

Beyond engendering motivation and engagement, this project certainly addresses several Kentucky Core Academic Standards. Looking at the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, it is clear that the reading fair encompasses quite a few.



The list below is by no means comprehensive, but probably includes the best fits:

- Reading Standard 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Reading Standard 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- Writing Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Interested in starting your own reading fair? The following resources will assist you:

[Reading Fair Introduction PowerPoint](#)
[Reading Fair–Student Packet](#)
[Reading Fair–Instructions for School Coordinator](#)
[Reading Fair–Judge's Rubric](#)

For more information, contact [Bobbi Caranna](#), an 8th-grade language arts teacher at Bullitt Lick Middle School and is Bullitt County's Middle School Teacher of the Year.

PD 360 Resource: The Students' Six Strategies

PD 360 contains the largest online library of training videos for educators in the world. When you access PD 360, you will have essential tools that provide more value than any other on-demand professional-development resource. The 2,000-plus videos and online professional learning community of nearly 1 million verified educators make PD 360 the world's largest on-demand professional development resource for educators. All Kentucky educators have access to PD 360 and other resources from the School Improvement Network from the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) homepage.

In the spring of 2011, Graig Meyer, Bonnie Davis and Dorothy Kelly created a professional development program to improve instruction for students of color by identifying and promoting the use of research-based and student-validated teaching strategies.

In designing the program, Meyer, Davis and Kelly met with students from the Blue Ribbon Mentor-Advocate program in Chapel Hill, N.C. The students selected six strategies that they perceived to be the most beneficial, particularly for students of color. The students' six strategies are:

1. visibility
2. proximity
3. connecting to students' lives
4. engaging students' culture
5. addressing race
6. connecting to students' future selves

Watch the [video](#). Learn more about the Students' Six Strategies by viewing video segments in the Equity and Innovation Students' Six program on PD 360.



Text Structure: A Blueprint for Comprehension

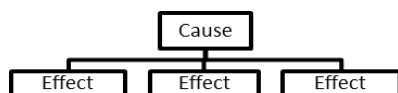
[Teresa Rogers](#) is a KDE literacy consultant. Rogers has taught nursing, health sciences, elementary reading and writing, and high school English. In the February 2013 issue, Rogers began a series on literacy in career and technical education (CTE). She continues here with part six of that series. For more information, visit her Literacy in Career and Technical Education [website](#).

Reading blueprints accurately is critical for successful completion of any construction project. A lack of understanding of how the blueprint is written can lead to a devastating outcome. In the same way, learning how information in a text is organized, or structured, is critical for development of students' comprehension skills.

Authors typically organize their thinking in one of these patterns: cause/effect, chronological/sequential, compare/contrast, descriptive or problem/solution. Each pattern is usually signaled by key words or phrases that are useful for students to recognize. Recognizing these makes it easier for them to follow the information in the text they are reading. In addition, they are then able to transfer this knowledge from the text to a graphic representation that will support their ability to summarize what they have read. Let's look at the most common types of text structure.

Cause and Effect

Often used in technical texts, this structure explains why or how something happens/happened. An automotive technology student might read a text that describes the effects of a transmission leak (cause). Key words they may encounter include as a result, because, for this reason and therefore. This organizer could be used to help the student summarize the information.



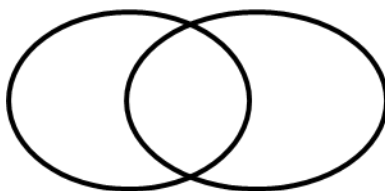
Chronological/Sequential

Performance-based skills are the foundation of the CTE classroom. Health science students may read a passage on how to set up and maintain a sterile field and be asked to apply those steps in a lab setting. To do so, they must identify key words such as first/second/third, before, after, prior to, initially, etc. An organizer might look like this:

Step 1
Step 2
Step 3

Compare and Contrast

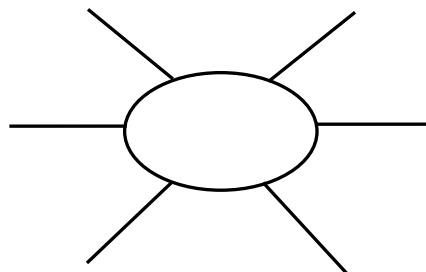
From comparing circuits to evaluating management systems, the CTE classroom provides countless opportunities for students to describe the similarities and differences between two or more subjects. Key signal words include also, both, in contrast, however and yet. There are several types of organizers that can be used, but the most common is the Venn diagram. Summarizing the information in this format supports students in thinking critically about the subjects.



Description

From describing elements of principles of artistic design to describing common animal health problems, students must be able to identify key characteristics, features or examples from a text. Key signal words include consists of, looks like and features, as well as descriptive words (e.g., color, shape, size) and position words (e.g., above, beside,

behind). An organizer will have a place to describe the subject such as the one below.



Problem/Solution

CTE students must be problem solvers. The ability to identify the problem and provide one or more solutions is a critical skill in the postsecondary world. Point out signal words such as advantage, because, led to and question. Use an organizer such as this to help students "see" and "think through" the problem.

Problems	Solution

Instructional Practice

So how do you support students to discover these text structures? Start with a short piece of text. Model, using a think aloud, what words give you a clue to the purpose of the text. Will the text describe, compare, explain the cause, etc.? Highlight those words and explain how they help you understand the passage. Use a graphic organizer that supports the text structure to help students organize the information. Provide supported practice until students are able to use this strategy independently.

Additional information can be found in this 42-minute [webinar](#), which also includes great resources that are easily adaptable to any content area.

Engaging Families: The National Association for the Education of Young Children

The [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (NAEYC) is a large non-profit association representing early childhood education teachers, para-educators, center directors, trainers, college educators, families of young children, policy makers, and advocates. NAEYC is focused on improving the well-being of young children, with particular emphasis on the quality of

educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8.

NAEYC's family website, [NAEYC for Families](#), offers content specific to the needs of parents and families. Resources include tips for back to school, transitioning to kindergarten and saying goodbye; help finding quality preschools and childcare through a

searchable database of NAEYC-accredited programs; numerous articles related to child development, reading and writing, math, music and more; and a multitude of other guidance on everything from getting a toddler to sleep to encouraging preschoolers to try new skills. Be sure to visit its website and to share this valuable resource with your students' families.

The News Literacy Project helps students be information savvy

The [News Literacy Project](#) (NLP) is an innovative national educational program that mobilizes seasoned journalists to help middle school and high school students sort fact from fiction in the digital age.

The project teaches students critical-thinking skills that will enable them to be smarter and more frequent consumers and creators of credible information across all media and platforms. It seeks to light a spark of interest in students to seek information that will make them more knowledgeable about their communities, the nation and the world.

The project also aspires to elevate the mission of news literacy nationally through classroom programs, digital media, workshops, public events and the news media itself.

NLP shows students how to distinguish verified information from spin, opinion and misinformation – whether they are using search engines to find websites with information about specific

topics, assessing a viral e-mail, viewing a video on YouTube, watching television news or reading a newspaper or blog post.

Students are being taught to seek news and information that will make them well-informed and engaged students, consumers and citizens. They also are being encouraged to produce news and information accurately, fairly and responsibly to make their own voices as credible and powerful as possible.

You can see NLP in action in a video report created by the project: [How to Know What to Believe](#). The [PBS NewsHour](#) also produced a six-minute report about NLP that aired in December 2011.

The project has created a new model by forging partnerships among active and retired journalists, the project's local coordinators in New York City, Chicago and the Washington, D.C., area, and English, history, government, humanities and journalism teachers. Journalist

fellows and teachers are devising units focusing on the importance of news to young people, the role of the First Amendment and a free media in a democracy, and the best ways to discern reliable information.

Working with educators, students and journalists, NLP has developed original curriculum materials based on engaging activities and student projects that build and reflect understanding of the program's essential questions. The curriculum includes material on a variety of topics, including viral e-mail, Wikipedia, search engines, YouTube and the news, that is presented through hands-on exercises, games, videos and the journalists' own compelling stories.

Additional video and broadcast reports that capture the project in action and showcase exemplary student work can be found on the project's [YouTube channel](#).

Editor's Note: The goals of NLP support the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for English Language Arts including, but not

limited to, the following anchor standards:

- CCR.R.6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- CCR.R.7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
- CCR.R.8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- CCR.W.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- CCR.W.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

Technology Critique: www.tagxedo.com

[Carrie Cox](#) is a 4th-grade teacher at Eastern Elementary School in Henry County. Cox has been a teacher in Henry County since 1998 and taught special education at Eastern for two years before she began teaching 4th grade.

[Tagxedo](#) allows users to create "word clouds" – visual representations of text that anyone can create to share ideas and key concepts about a specific topic. Kindergarten through 12th-grade students could use this for many different projects.

In fact, the website has a list of 101 ways to use Tagxedo. Suggestions include: summarize a piece of writing, make a self-portrait, critique a book, introduce a new topic/concept in class, create synonym and antonym word clouds, describe a character (character traits), make a guessing game, and



create a biography of a famous person. Outside of work, I've created word clouds as projects for college courses I've taken, and I even have a friend using Tagxedo to create a word cloud to display at her mother's 70th birthday party!

When I have used other word cloud sites in

the past, my students have been so engaged. They love having creative choice of what words to use, how to position them, what font and pattern to use, and which words they want to make stand out the most. After creating their first word cloud, they ask to do this all year long. Some students even create them at home and bring them in to share.

If I were going to change anything about this site it would be that the homepage isn't as user friendly and kid friendly as I would like it to be. I couldn't find directions, so I just clicked around and figured things out. Other than that, I am truly impressed with this site.

Please send critiques of technology that supports your professional growth or classroom instruction to [MK Overstreet](#).

Two New ELA/Literacy Resources for Back-to-School Preparation

In Common: Effective Writing for All Students

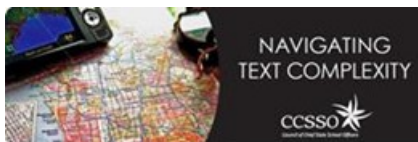
See what the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) might look like in student hands! View this collection of K-12 [annotated student writing samples](#) aligned to the CCSS ELA Writing Standards. They are created and annotated by expert classroom teachers and writing coaches, collected from classrooms across the country and organized in a variety of easy-to-access ways for your use.

In Common is an expansion of writing samples offered by [Appendix C](#) of the CCSS. Each major type of Common Core State Standards writing is represented – argument/opinion, informative/explanatory and narrative.

Supporting materials available include:

- writing prompts, articles and texts used by students
- clean copies of student samples for professional learning
- annotated versions of each sample

These resources were developed for educators in partnership by the [Vermont Writing Collaborative](#), The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Student Achievement Partners.



CCSSO Navigating Text Complexity

Understanding text complexity is essential to implementing the Common Core State Standards in ELA and Literacy. But what makes a text complex and how will it help prepare my students for college and career? What tools can I use to select rich, worthy texts for instruction in my classroom? How can analyzing the qualitative characteristics of a text inform my instruction of a text?

Educators from 12 states came together to create a collection of online [tools to navi-](#)

[gate text complexity and text selection](#), which includes:

- text complexity roadmaps (comprehensive text analyses)
- model text sets for units of instruction
- support tools for analyzing your own texts and building your own text sets
- text-dependent question resources
- text roadmaps in the classroom – two sample lesson videos

[Visit these resources](#); then, work with educators across the country to analyze texts, build text sets and generate rich text-dependent questions by [joining the interactive Edmodo group](#).

These resources were assembled by educators from Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, West Virginia and Wyoming, members of CCSSO's ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards.

Letters About Literature 2014 Contest Rules and Guidelines

[Letters About Literature](#) (LAL) is a reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to that author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally.

Letters are judged on state and national levels. Tens of thousands of students from across

the country enter Letters About Literature each year. Students in grades 4-12 are eligible to enter the Letters About Literature reading and writing contest.

LAL awards prizes on both the state and national levels. Each participating state center has its own panel of judges who select the top essayists in the state. State winners will receive a cash award

and advance to the national-level judging. A panel of national judges for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will select one national winner per competition level to receive a \$1,000 cash award.

The judges also will select one national honor per competition level to receive on each competition level to receive a \$200

cash award.

Grades 9-12 entries must be postmarked by Dec. 10, 2013. Grades 4-8 must be postmarked by Jan. 10, 2014.

Read previous national-winning entries [here](#). Read our state winners in the [May 2013 Literacy Link](#). Click [here](#) for rules and guidelines.



Upcoming Literacy Events Around Kentucky

Free Book Available Statewide

The Kentucky Press Association and Newspapers in Education are offering everyone in Kentucky a free book this fall. This year's theme is Kentucky agriculture. The story, *Outstanding in His Field* by Kentucky author Leigh Anne Florence and illustrator Chris Ware, will begin in newspapers across the state the week of Sept. 8. Teachers should contact their local newspaper to request free scrapbooks. Use scrapbooks to collect each weekly chapter and at the end of

the 10 weeks have your own unique book. Florence is available to visit schools and libraries and autograph scrapbooks.

This internationally award-winning project also includes [online activities](#) for each chapter and podcasts of the story character, Woody, reading each chapter. The project runs Sept. 8-Nov. 30, 2013.

[KCTE/LA Annual Conference](#)
The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts will

host its annual conference Feb. 21-22, 2013. Entitled "Bridging the Literacy Gap," the 78th Anniversary Conference will be held at the Embassy Suites Lexington. Featured speakers include Barry Lane, author of *After the End*, and Brenda Overturf, author of *Word Nerds*. For more information and to register, visit its [website](#).

[Project Archaeology](#)
On Sept. 12, 2013, at Lake Barkley State Resort Park, Project Archaeology uses archaeological inquiry to foster

understanding of past and present cultures, improve social studies and science education, and enhance citizenship education. This workshop will highlight Kentucky's prehistoric cultures and the curriculum's links to environmental topics. For more information visit [projectarchaeology.org](#). This event will take place before the Kentucky Association of Environmental Education conference. To register, please visit [www.kaee.org/conference](#). Registration fee is \$50.

New Professional Learning Definition and Standards

During the 2013-14 school year, the Professional Learning Task Force (PLTF), consisting of practicing teachers, administrators, higher education and other stakeholders led by Joellen Killion, met several times to establish a comprehensive professional learning system for Kentucky educators. In response to the PLTF policy and guidance recommendations, the Kentucky Board of Education approved a new definition of professional learning (PL), along with new Professional Learning Standards at its June 5 meeting.

What is the difference in “professional development” (PD) and “professional learning” (PL)? PD is primarily the sharing or dissemination of information, skills and strategies without the intentionality or accountability for implementation, data-based focus or expected results. While it might be assumed that exposure to new information and ideas would transfer to practice, the reality is, it typically does not. Killion explains the difference between “professional

development” and professional learning [here](#).

Professional learning should:

- have a degree of accountability for implementing new knowledge, ideas and strategies
- focus on topics, skills or strategies chosen out of a desire or need to improve practice as evidenced by observations, reflections or data
- occur several times per week during the workday (job embedded)
- increase educator effectiveness and results for all students

The shift from professional development to professional learning in Kentucky is intended to elevate the importance of growth in educators that is driven by the need to improve student results. Merely accumulating hours of PD must be replaced by an intentional and systemic approach to learning, applying, reflecting and refining practice so that teach-

ers’ results (i.e., their effectiveness) and students’ results both improve.

The other PLTF policy and guidance recommendations are being addressed by a KDE professional learning and support strategy team. Coming soon will be a professional learning Web page that will include the definition of PL, the new PL standards, resources for professional learning and guidance for schools and districts as they implement professional learning into their professional development plans. Continue to watch for more information about “professional learning.”

For additional resources on Professional Learning, see:

- *Standards for Professional Learning* (Learning Forward) at www.learningforward.org/standards
- Kentucky’s Professional Learning Task Force at <http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/lit/pages/pltf.aspx>

Kentucky Reading Association Annual Conference

The 2013 Kentucky Reading Association (KRA) Conference is preparing for another outstanding event, themed “Literacy without Borders” in Lexington, Oct. 17-19, 2013.

You do not want to miss the opportunity to celebrate KRA’s 50th year and hear from Don Leu, Brenda Overturf, Maureen McLaughlin, Betsy Baker, Suzy Kline and other national, state and local literacy experts at this year’s conference. (Preview this

year’s speakers [here](#).) Sessions are designed to focus our attention on the Kentucky Core Academic Standards, technology in education, exceptional children and research-based instruction for pre-K through postsecondary literacy learners.

In addition, KRA will celebrate several special occasions at the 2013 conference, including the Kentucky Bluegrass Awards Luncheon with special guest author George

Ella Lyon, the Author’s Luncheon and a legislative forum. You can find out more and register at www.kyreading.org.

For more information, please see the [conference flyer](#) or click for information specific to [middle/high school](#), [special education](#) or [educational technology](#).



New Resources Added to Center On Instruction Website

The [Center on Instruction](#) has just released three new online courses. Each course consists of four self-paced modules and is designed for state department of education staff, technical assistance providers, instructional specialists and special education teachers. To access any of the courses, visit [RMC Educator's Academy](#) and create a free account.

Online Course: Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction

Based on the document *Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents: A Guidance Document from the Center on Instruction*, this course is designed to help participant un-

derstand ways to improve classroom instruction for all students and to strengthen literacy interventions for struggling readers.

Online Course: Bringing Literacy Strategies into Content Instruction: Professional Learning for Secondary-Level Teachers

Based on the guide *Bringing Literacy Strategies into Content Instruction: Professional Learning for Secondary-Level Teachers*, this course is designed to help participants understand the research-based guidance on academic literacy instruction in the content areas.

It offers ideas for applying the guidance to improve instruction and focuses particularly on the effective use of text in content areas.

Online Course: Intensive Interventions for Students Struggling in Reading and Mathematics

Based on the practice guide *Intensive Interventions for Students Struggling in Reading and Mathematics*, this course provides research-based guidance for intensifying instruction in reading and mathematics for students with significant learning difficulties or disabilities in kindergarten through grade 12.

Participants will learn broad guidelines for the design and delivery of intensive interventions to deliver appropriate, responsive instruction for students with learning difficulties.



CENTER ON
INSTRUCTION

Developing a Passion for Learning Requires Some Student Choice

Jackie Rogers is a KDE literacy consultant. Rogers was a high school English teacher for 15 years and worked for four years as a curriculum specialist in Pulaski County before joining KDE.

I ran into a former student at the grocery store a few weeks back and we somehow ended up in a conversation about nuclear energy. We talked around the disaster in Fukushima, the coal industry, cost and safety. It was a robust conversation between two folks on different sides of an issue, and I couldn't help but fill with pride. Daniel was the embodiment of the literate adult the writers of the Common Core sketched out in their portrait of a student who is college- and career-ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language.

I finally broke the spell of our friendly argument by asking when he'd become an energy expert. "I've been thinking about it all my life," was his response. I guess the look on my face begged him to explain. It seems his grandfather was a soldier in the Pacific theatre during World War II. He was diagnosed with cancer a few years after his return and the family always blamed his proximity to the atom bombs for his plight. It was a family story that captured his imagination. He said he was always fascinated how something

could be so powerful and so dangerous.

"Every time I saw something on TV about Hiroshima, I watched it. Every time I got a chance to do a school project of my choice, it always had something to do with nuclear energy. All of that led to my interest and appreciation of the Japanese."

Daniel grew from a child hearing hand-me-down war stories to an informed world citizen who could make educated decisions, advocate for his beliefs, write about his conclusions and understand issues.

It made me think about the classroom experiences Daniel probably had. I can't say I gave him enough opportunities to read, research and write about a topic of strong interest. I'm not sure any of his teachers did. Evidently he was used to putting off his interests until after school. He remained a good student, but I tried to imagine what potential went untapped. Despite his experiences, he became a lifelong learner. In *Notice and Note* (Beers & Probst, 2013) they say school should go beyond preparing students for college and career. "School ought to be a place where you go to develop a passion for learning – for a lifetime of learning" (62).

In what ways, then, can teachers differenti-

ate so they meet the intent of the standards and offer student choice?

One way is through text selection. So many of the Kentucky Core Academic Standards hinge on reading. Students are asked to read closely for several purposes (e.g., determine what the text says explicitly, make inferences, find evidence to support writing and speaking), but close reading also supports analysis, determining central ideas or themes, delineating an argument, interpretation of words or phrases, and evaluating content.

These transferable skills – transferable across contents and from school to work, college or life – can be taught, reinforced and assessed using a variety of texts simultaneously. With students like Daniel in mind, I would make sure at least a portion of the text was theirs to choose.

All students have interests. Giving them a choice can be the motivation they need to engage deeply with a text once they have mastered these skills.

In October's edition of the *Literacy Link* I will lay out a sample instructional plan for skills mastery and student choice.



CIITS Implementation Sharing: Covington Independent Schools

Kentucky school districts are finding the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) to be a helpful educator resource of support for teachers and leaders. Among this support is the ability for all

school districts to create resources and share new ideas in order to help one another. The Covington Independent School District is spreading the word about CIITS implementation in its district by highlighting posters

that share a few ideas through teacher perspective. Tiffany Powell, 3rd-grade teacher at Latonia Elementary School, shares some ideas about why CIITS is her best friend in [this poster](#).

Feel free to send in models and ideas about how your district is finding success through implementing CIITS to the kdeciits-mailbox@education.ky.gov.



The Speech Professional Education Alliance of Kentucky (SPEAK) Conference

The third annual SPEAK conference for middle and high school speech and debate educators will be held Sept. 27 at the University of Kentucky. SPEAK is sponsored by the Kentucky National Forensic League and co-sponsored by the Kentucky High School Speech League, the Kentucky Catholic Forensic League, the Kentucky Educational Speech and Drama Association and the Division of Instructional

Communication at the University of Kentucky. Additional funding is provided by the National Federation of High Schools with promotional support from KDE.

SPEAK 2012 was attended by more than 60 educators and was well received. SPEAK 2013 (Episode 3) promises to be even better! The keynote speaker will be Adam Jacobi, prominent speech educator who has served in vari-

ous roles with the National Forensic League, Ripon College and Harvard Debate Council.

Thirteen additional seminars will be offered throughout the day on topics including Program Reviews, speech and the Common Core Standards, debate coaching and instruction how-tos, and instructional seminars on training judges and picking/cutting scripts.

Registration is due by Sept. 23 at www.kyspeak.org. Fees for registration are \$25 (due upon arrival) and include a catered lunch. Certificates of attendance as well as door prizes will be given. Additional information about the conference, seminars and discounted hotel rates as well as additional support material for speech and debate educators can be found on the [web-site](http://www.kyspeak.org).

Help

Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov to submit. Your submissions may be included in the Literacy Link to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past Literacy Links on KDE's website:
[Click Here](#)



If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Cindy Parker – Literacy Coordinator – cindy.parker@education.ky.gov
- Kelly Clark – Literacy Consultant – kelly.clark@education.ky.gov
- Jackie Rogers – Literacy Consultant – jackie.rogers@education.ky.gov
- Teresa Rogers – Literacy Consultant – teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov
- Pamela Wininger – Literacy Consultant – pamela.wininger@education.ky.gov
- MK Overstreet – Literacy Consultant – mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov
- Kathy Mansfield– Library Media/Textbooks Consultant – kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov



Feedback from the Field



Your feedback helps us to tailor the Link to best meet the needs of teachers. Tell us how you're using it. Tell us how you'd like to use it. Tell us what you want to see more or less of. We want to hear from you!

[E-mail MK Overstreet.](#)

"I just want to say how much I enjoyed the literacy newsletter! I

was super impressed with the article about the Summer Boost program via U of L and J.B. Atkinson Elementary School."

- Carrie C.

"The latest Link was so good. Your links are so strategically and cleanly placed. Can't tell you how important that is for smooth read-

ing. Anyway, very nice job on all of it."

- Jackie R.

"Thank you for writing such a wonderful article about our program. You are more than welcome to come see us in action during the school year."

- Stephanie N.

Additional Reading and Other Resources

- [TextProject](#) offers a number of helpful resources related to text complexity and vocabulary. [E4](#) is a series of 32 flexible vocabulary-development lessons each focusing on an everyday concept and brainstorming other words that describe the concept. Each activity can be used for a few minutes a day over the course of a week.
- KDE has developed two [professional learning resources](#) to support districts/schools in learning more about the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning and how they can support local professional learning teams. The first module, *Professional Development—Professional Learning: What's the Difference?* is designed to guide facilitators through information and resources to use with their local teams. The second module, is broken into five segments, each one illustrating an online resource that may be used to accomplish professional-learning needs. While not a comprehensive list, the examples demonstrate strategies for working individually, in small groups or as a school.
- The New York City Department of Education (NYDOE) Common Core Lab Team has drafted [template tasks](#) for informative and explanatory writing to encompass the Common Core State Standards demands for our youngest students. In the spirit of collaboration and collegial support, they have made these available for comment and use by the community. Please provide the NY DOE Common Core Lab Team with any input, comment or resources to improve this first effort. E-mail your feedback to [Nancy Birson](#).
- [Inspiring Middle School Literacy](#) – These online self-paced lessons for blended learning, funded by the Walmart Foundation, are designed to enhance the literacy skills of struggling readers in grades 5-8. Each uses videos, interactive activities, note taking, reading and writing to present students with an engaging science, social studies, math or English/language arts topic. Each lesson addresses a range of literacy strategies, which are listed in the accompanying teacher's guide.
- The [KDE Media Portal](#) provides school administrators, teachers, KDE staff and others throughout the state access to a single, central repository for all of the agency's video content. Users will no longer need to search multiple locations for KDE videos. Videos are grouped in categories and searchable by tag words. Among the regular video features available are recordings of the Kentucky Board of Education meetings, superintendent webcasts and webcasts on the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES). A number of other webcasts, information and training videos are also available.

